



HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

An electronic newsletter in support of public safety services in Montana

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IM Weekly Highlights



- The Williams Coulee site in Garfield County is now ready to receive a new tower and shelter. Contractors were able to get all concrete poured before the weather changed. (See photo on back page.)
- Roger Smith, IM Radio System Administrator, completed software upgrades to the microwave system on the west end of the NTIP.
- The IM received NEPA approval from Homeland Security/FEMA for the Hathaway site.

WBIWG Attendees Set Agenda for Moving Forward

By Scott Bradford sbradford@mt.gov

The Western Border Interoperable Working Group (WBIWG) held a successful meeting in Regina, Saskatchewan, Nov. 16-18. This year's 34 participants represented a number of public safety and enforcement groups concerned about the improvement of border emergency communications and cooperation. Represented were: the Province of Saskatchewan Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing (meeting host); Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Headquarters and Divisions D & F; Canadian Border Services; Canadian Police Research Centre; City of Regina; Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region VIII; Grasslands National Park; Industry Canada (IC); Interoperability Montana (IM); North Dakota State Radio; the State of Montana's Public Safety Services Bureau; the U.S. Border Patrol; U.S. Customs & Border Protection; and several private agencies.

Wed., Nov. 17 activities were dominated by a number of presentations that provided background information and up-to-date status of operable and interoperable communications efforts in the region. Richard Cayouette provided a summary from a national Canadian perspective of the CANUS Border Radio Project that will evaluate coverage on both sides of the border and identify potential gaps. This project will be completed in early spring, with regional briefings following the study. The joint Canadian/U.S. Integrated Border Enforcement Teams (IBET) provided a history of their combined operations and shared examples of successful processes that resulted in the transfer of vital



information. The State of Montana—represented by the IM Project—along with the State of North Dakota, briefed the group on progress made on their respective radio projects.

Thursday's activities were spearheaded by a comprehensive briefing of the Saskatchewan Public Safety Telecommunications Network (PPSTN) and a panel discussion on funding, governance and issues related to a system involving more than 240 trunked sites serving over 6,000 users. The remainder of the time was spent in roundtable discussions regarding the future of the WBIWG and the direction the group should take. Consensus was reached that the regional approach was excellent and complements more policy-level meetings on a national level, similar to the recent meeting held in Windsor, Ontario. However, the regional approach provides an opportunity to initiate and move forward interoperability projects that will directly impact responder safety and effectiveness.

At the end of the meeting, the working group had defined six objectives for moving forward, as follows:

1. Saskatchewan will take the lead in exploring opportunities to partner with other regional international cooperative efforts, including the Pacific NW Economic Region, to bring a greater focus to interoperability issues.
2. The Canadian Police Research Centre will coordinate a joint meeting during the regional briefing on the CANUS project, to be held in the spring of 2011.
3. All agencies will continue to define critical user needs.
4. Montana will spearhead an effort to request cross-border sharing of spectrum based on its border grant application.
5. IBET will facilitate a demonstration project, likely at Coutts/Sweetgrass, for its cross-border interconnect.
6. The Canadian Police Research Centre will promote ideas stemming from the WBIWG meeting at its Dec. Canadian interoperability summit in Victoria.

Kerry O'Connell Re-Elected SCMICC Project Director

By E. Wing Spooner espoosner@mt.gov

Kerry O'Connell, who recently left a DES position with Sweetgrass County to become the Communications System Manager with Gallatin County's 9-1-1, was re-elected as the South Central Montana Interoperability Communications Consortium (SCMICC) Project Director at its Bozeman meeting on Wed., Nov. 13. Peggy Glass, Park County's 9-1-1 Director, was re-elected consortium

HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

chair. She gave an update on the recent IM Finance, Governance and Project Directors meetings.

Members reported on activities within their jurisdictions. Steve DiGiovanna, Madison County, reported that the county is in the process of moving its dispatch. Bruce Cunningham, Gallatin County, said that testing of the trunking system is taking place. The county is anxious to begin replacing its wideband paging system as soon as it receives its DHS FY10 grant award. Ben Hess, Gallatin County, reported on plans to evaluate progress on the regional needs assessment that was conducted five years ago. Pat Lonergan, Gallatin County, gave an update on the SuperNet Radio System project he has been working on that allows dispatch and emergency operations centers to talk with each other on dedicated radios in the event that phone lines are down. Frequency coordination is complete and the installation at Meyer's Flat is scheduled soon.

The next SCMICC meeting will be held in the spring with conference calls scheduled on an as-needed basis in between.



Concrete Pour at Williams Coulee Site, Garfield County

I-15/90 Interoperability Consortium Meeting

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

At the Thurs., Nov. 18 meeting of the I-15/90 Corridor Consortium, Project Director Dave McPherson reported on the Nov. 9 IM Project Directors (IMPD) meeting, and explained that the short-term proposal to establish a user fee system using DHS grant funds to pay for the first year of fees was not approved by DHS. He also indicated that the recent IM audit came out well, with only two major findings. Dave reported that the IMPD also reviewed and made changes to the latest version of the IM Business Plan. In addition, consortium members learned about upcoming bylaws changes and discussed financial challenges the IM is facing.

Members also were updated on the status of PSIC-funded sites in the Southwest Loop. Work was taking place at the Sierra site the day of the meeting. Dave gave a report on remaining work needed at Red Mountain. Tom Dunne, Dunne Communications, intends to escort Motorola personnel via snow cat to Red

Mountain to start turning up the trunking equipment. Plans are to continue work on sites at lower elevations, including the Butte Silver-Bow 9-1-1 Center, which is accessible year-round. Issues with the cellular company partner at the Rumsey Mountain site are still pending.

Wing Spooner, PSSB, provided an update on IM Technical Committee activities, including work on site maintenance checklists, PSIC-funded Strategic Technology Reserve (STR) purchases and R-56 grounding.

The next meeting of the I-15/90 Consortium is Thurs., Dec. 16 at the Butte-Silver Bow Chamber of Commerce, 1000 George Street, at 10:00 am.

Upcoming Meetings

- **Mon., Nov. 22**
IM Technical Committee (IMTC)
Helena • 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
MACo Offices, 2715 Skyway Dr.
- **Wed., Nov. 30**
Tri-County Consortium
Helena • 10:00 am - noon
IM Offices, 2717 Skyway Dr.
- **Tues., Nov. 30**
State Agency Radio Users Task Force
Helena • 9:00 – 10:30 am
Rm. 109, Old Livestock Building, 1310 E. Lockey St.
- **Tues., Nov. 30**
Mobile Data Terminal Consortium
Bozeman • 10:00 am – noon
SAR Building, 219 Tamarack
Conference Call-In Number: 406-582-2441
- **Thurs., Dec. 2**
Big Sky 11 Consortium
Billings • 9:00 am Tech. Committee
• 10:00 am Consortium
Yellowstone County EOC, 2305 8th Ave. North
- **Sun-Wed., Dec. 5-8**
4th Canadian Public Safety Interoperability Workshop
A CITIG National Forum "From Action to Results"
Victoria, BC • www.cacp.ca
The Fairmont Empress, 721 Government Street
- **Thurs., Dec. 9**
Central Montana Consortium (CMICC)
Great Falls • 10:00 am
Disaster & Emergency Services Office, 521 1st St. NW

Happy Thanksgiving!



**In observance of the Thanksgiving Holiday,
the HAM will not be published next
Friday, Nov. 26.**